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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000537

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2018

TAGS: PGOV PTER MASS MARR MOPS KU

SUBJECT: KUWAIT MINDEF: STRONG TIES DESPITE FMS IRRITANTS;
CONCERNs OVER TERRORISM AND IRAN

REF: A. KUWAIT 508
 1B. KUWAIT 502
 1C. KUWAIT 499
 1D. KUWAIT 294
 1E. KUWAIT238

Classified By: Ambassador Deborah K. Jones for reasons 1.4 b and d

Summary

11. (C) Ambassador used her introductory call on Kuwait MinDef Shaykh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah to thank him for the unparalleled support Kuwait provides to our military forces and their efforts in Iraq and the broader war on terrorism. The Ambassador noted that we were looking at ways to improve our bilateral mil-mil training. Shaykh Jaber expounded at length on terrorism and its root cause-poverty, and regional Iranian influence. He raised delays in receiving pricing and availability data of military equipment, specifically the C-130J, and noted a recent GCC decision to establish a 'rapid deployment' special forces brigade under the umbrella of the Peninsula Shield. End summary.

Indispensable Support

12. (C) The Ambassador began the meeting by thanking the MinDef for the indispensable support provided by the GOK to our troops here and in Iraq and Afghanistan; there were good historical reasons for this relationship and it remained the cornerstone of our bilateral relations. The Ambassador acknowledged Kuwaiti interest in expanding our bilateral mil-mil training program and said we were now in the planning stages.

Military Role in Combating Terror

13. (C) Shaykh Jaber responded with a long commentary on terrorism and its roots, which he attributed to education and poverty, and the undue influence of Iran throughout the region. Ambassador noted the ongoing debates within the GOK with respect to former GTMO detainee Abdallah Al-Ajmi (ref A, C) and shared with MinDef the paradigm of combating terrorism described earlier to GOK security services by visiting S/CT Coordinator Dell Dailey; in this pyramid of approaches and solutions, 'kill or capture' represented only fifteen percent of our effort; the bulk consisted of bringing about societal changes, and in this regard militaries could play a role in terms of forging national identity and secure discipline and purpose for young people.

FMS: "Too Slow"

¶ 4. (C) Turning to the US-Kuwaiti bilateral relationship, the Mindef complained about delays in pricing and availability information for C-130Js, while welcoming more bilateral training. (Note: Prior to OIF, U.S. maneuver units were frequently based in Kuwait and exercised with Kuwait military units. End note.) He added that GCC defense ministers, in a recent meeting in Doha, had agreed to establish a rapid deployment special forces brigade under the umbrella of the Peninsula Shield.

¶ 5. (C) Queried regarding the potential impact of a recent GOK decision to buy out, its occasionally long-in-tooth and billet general officer ranks, the MinDef said he had disagreed with this step, but believed they would meet their staffing requirements.

Camp Bucca/Khor Abdullah

¶ 6. (C) Ambassador also raised the need for progress on Khor Abdullah salvage operations and the issue of a border crossing near Camp Bucca, and informed MinDef that she would pursue these matters further at a subsequent meeting with the Minister of Interior.

Traffic Altercation

¶ 7. (C) The Ambassador advised the MinDef that an investigation was continuing into the alleged traffic altercation between U.S. military troops and Kuwaiti

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Nationals (ref B), and that the matter was being treated very seriously; U.S. troops were grateful for the hospitality they received here and did not wish to jeopardize it. The MinDef offered his assurance that this incident would not damage our strong bilateral relationship.

Request for Support of Kuwait Air Force HQ Move

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¶ 8. (C) While departing, MinDef's staff approached OMCK Chief to clarify that a broad request for support by MinDef referred specifically to moving Mubarak Airbase (along with the Kuwait Air Force HQ and the U.S. Military's Aerial Port of Debarkation) to a new location known as West Mubarak Airbase to make way for civil aviation expansion at the current location.

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